



More Than a Conqueror: Regaining Your Willpower over Food

Annie Maiden-Gipson, R.N.

MORE THAN A CONQUEROR: Regaining your willpower over food

First Edition

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annie Maiden-Gipson has worked as a registered nurse for over 29 years in the hospital and in home care and has counseled hundreds of patients and families on how the role of nutrition affects their wellbeing. In her role as home care nurse, Annie has helped some of her patients do a makeover in their kitchen cabinets and refrigerator in order to create an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle. Those who listened and implemented the changes saw an improvement in their health status and reported less visits to the emergency room. Annie is committed to helping people take control of their health by helping them to become disciplined in their food choices and eating habits.

This book was written out of Annie's own struggle with her love for food and she shares the difficulty she experienced in conquering her over the top eating habits. Annie believes that her book will help you to understand the challenges you face and will help you to recognize the source of your strength. Annie believes that you will gain insight into how to be courageous in overcoming your obstacles and you will learn how you can be strengthened to regain your will power over food. Annie is a living testimony of the power of God's word and the magnitude of God's love for us. As you read this wonderful book, be blessed and know that you are more than a conqueror and you can do all things through Christ who will strengthen you. If Annie did it so can you! *If your desire to be free exceeds your desire to stay where you are at; if you are open for sound counsel; if you are ready to walk in the wisdom of God and are willing to put in the hard work, you can regain your willpower over food.*

A PRAYER FOR YOU

“I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may grow in your knowledge of God.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future He has promised to those He called. I want you to realize what a rich inheritance He has given to His people.

I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of His power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in a place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come” (Ephesians 16-21).

Father, give your children the desire, commitment, willingness and courage to overcome and may they be opened and honest about their weakness and struggles and may they surrender these areas to you so that you can become their strength.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, my heavenly Father, Your son Jesus, and the precious Holy Spirit. Thank you for not letting me go. At times it seems as though I loved food more than I loved your Word. I know I challenged your love. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for giving me the heart to repent. You deserve all the praise and all the glory. My deepest desire is to live a surrendered life. Thank you for teaching me how to love you, how to obey you, how to reverence you and how to give you the first fruit in all areas of my life, especially my time, and not my second best, and how to praise you—not in words only but also as a life style.

I would like to thank my husband, Isaiah, who has gone on to be with the Lord for giving me the freedom to seek to become that Proverbs 31 woman—even when I didn't want the challenge. When God sent you, He sent His best. Thank you for having a quiet, gentle strength.

To my sweet, wonderful children: Kimberly, Christine, and Matthew, you are my gifts from God, the ornaments around my neck (Proverbs 1:9), “the fruit of my womb” (Deuteronomy 28:4). You have always been children of excellence and full of wisdom. God has always made me known from your early childhood that He has placed something special in each of you. You made my job as a mother easy. Thank you for your obedience and thank you for reverencing the things of God. Thank you for always keeping me on task.

To my former Pastor, Pastor H. McNelty, who was Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church, Melrose Park, Illinois, who has gone on to be with the Lord, thank you for being a spiritual father for the seventeen years I was under your shepherding. Thank you for feeding me the word and for helping me to maintain my spiritual walk.

To my parents who are no longer with me. Thank you for leaving me with the knowledge of Christ. It is indeed a rich inheritance. You were not perfect parents. You were flawed in so many ways but you made one thing very clear in your household: That we were to govern our lives according to the Word of God.

To my one nursing supervisor, who shall remain nameless; thank you for not promoting me. I now understand that promotion comes from the Lord, (Psalm 75:6, 7) and He would not allow me to be promoted. I now understand that you were an instrument in His hands. Had you promoted me, not being spiritually mature, I would have sought the praise of people and not the approval of God. So thank you for not promoting me.

To my current wonderful Pastor, Pastor Carlton Arthurs, Senior Pastor at Wheaton Christian Center, Carol Stream, Illinois who God sent all the way from Belize, Central America to teach me how to stand; under your pastoral guidance, I began the process of growing up. Thank you for answering the call. You taught me a lot from the Word of God but one lesson stands out clear: The importance of answering the call and showing up in the place that God has called you to be. Had you not answered the call I would not have been equipped to stand against a generational curse. Because of what you taught me from the Word, I was able to stand. I will always be grateful to you and to Dr. Myles Munroe, Founder and Senior Pastor of Bahamas Faith Ministries International for helping me to understand Kingdom. You and Dr. Munroe pointed out that in a democracy everyone has an opinion and they get to vote but that in a Kingdom, subjects don't vote. They obey the decrees that the King or Queen establishes. I have found out that this is a key ingredient to a successful walk with God. Thank you.

To my brothers and sisters, I thank God for you often. Thank you for your love and prayers. Eva thank you for all the summer vacations and holidays my family and I spent at your home. Your place was a wonderful time of refreshing for us. The love you and your family shared with us mark special memories in our hearts. And Lillian, my oldest sister and my prayer warrior, thank you for your prayers, strength, and encouraging phone calls.

Thank you, again, to my children Kim and Chris who did the preliminary editing of this book. Thank you for correcting my mistakes. And Chris, thank you for believing in me and for believing that I could do this for the Kingdom. You never doubted me and always encouraged me. Thank you. Kim, I know you had doubts but thank you for not voicing them. This was a critical transitional time for me and I needed a positive environment and you recognized that. I also know that there was a little voice within you that said, "Mom might pull this off." I would also like to give a special thank you to two wonder people who are very dear to me and whose opinion I value and who are also fellow members of Wheaton Christian Center, Joyce Carter and Gail Krahenbuhl. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to read this book and for correcting some mistakes. Your comments concerning this book confirmed what the Lord had been telling me. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

This book was written for those individuals who have made a serious commitment to win over their appetite in order to regain their health or maintain a state of wellness; it was also written for you, the individual, whom God has given specific instructions to take better care of His temple so that you can avoid a health crisis and be all that God has called you to be. For those individuals who have a desire to win over their appetite but can't quite make it to the winners' circle, I write to you as well. It is my desire that this book will give you the edge you need to overcome. This book details my rebellion, struggles, defeat, surrender and eventually victory over my appetite—all as a response to words that were spoken to me over ten years ago: 'Nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables.' I share "nuggets" from my journey in fighting the war with obesity and the steps I took to defend myself against the Spirit of Gluttony as I strained to reach my goal. During my journey a war waged inside of me. It was a battle between good and evil. One side was calling me to adopt a more disciplined and healthy lifestyle and the other side was pressuring me to maintain my undisciplined, out of control eating habits which had begun to produce a state of disease in my body. **I had a choice to make.** I chose the disciplined and healthy lifestyle. God put it this way: "Behold, I lay before you today a blessing and a curse, life and death. Choose life that you and your seed might live" (paraphrased, Deuteronomy 30:19-20). I made a decision to be obedient first and to accept the council of God—that small still voice that I heard over ten years ago that whispered, nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables was the voice of God. And second, I made a decision to be the example and pass on the knowledge of good nutrition to my children so that the state of disease would no longer be a part of my family inheritance. I made a decision to erase from my family line the inheritance of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and a host of other maladies that plague so many families. I have learned that God is a God of generations. He was not dealing with just me. When the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me over ten years ago: 'nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables,' He was not dealing with me alone. He was thinking of my children and grandchildren. He was thinking of the generations that would come after me. I have learned that every decision we make involve others. For example, if someone makes the decision to become involved in drugs, gambling, adultery, etc., that decision never involves just them. Others are injured as well. I encourage you to make your decisions with great care because they do impact others.

Although this book is about making a commitment to develop a healthy lifestyle, it is really a book about understanding the love of a father for his children. I share my love story of a divine intervention: How God's love for me rescued me from an insatiable appetite that had begun to produce a state of

disease in my body and, most likely, would have robbed me of the long life that God promised me. My heart's response to what God has done for me is, how can I reach others to share the good news about His love for us and His willingness to help us overcome in our areas of weakness. God does not hold our shortcomings or weaknesses against us. He has already provided the solution and is now eager to assist us as we surrender areas of sin or weaknesses to Him. The bible tells us that God "does not show favoritism" (Romans 2:11). If He helped me, He will also help you. **It is my deepest desire and prayer that as you read this book and meditate on the "nuggets," that they will strengthen you, empower you, and give you the courage to make it to the winners' circle.** With all of my heart, I pray that you will sense the Father's love and allow Him to help you gain the victory over your appetite and I pray that you will see the bigger picture. That it is not about food.

This book was designed to be a book of freedom. Not freedom to do as you please but freedom to do things God's way. Freedom to learn and the desire to learn, so that "The eyes of your understanding will be enlightened..." (Ephesians 1:18). Freedom to make choices that will enable you to overcome in the area of wrong food choices, so that you can reclaim your health or maintain your wellness. Freedom from the spirit of gluttony that tries to entangle (snare, trap, capture, hinder), (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary), your health and cause your affections to drift so that you cannot run the race that God has chosen for you to run (Hebrew 12:1); and freedom from the sin of rebellion so that you might submit your appetite to God and allow Him to take you to the winners' circle. It is God's desire to see His creation win in life. He has no other purpose than to love us and take us to the winners' circle. I strongly encourage you to research and read so that "The eyes of your understanding will be enlightened..." (Ephesians 1:18). Recognize and accept the hand that is guiding you to victory and, above all, read God's Words, on a daily basis "For they are life unto those who find them, and health to all their flesh" (Proverbs 4:22).

Having worked as a registered nurse for twenty six years, I could have attempted to tell my story in a more technical, scientific format, but chose not to because I have learned that, no matter what expert advice is given, you have to be able to walk it out and sustain your level of commitment for your well-being and for the glory of God. Therefore my objectives for writing this book are to help you recognize that your body is the temple of God and that God is jealous for His temple. I have also written this book to assist you in recognizing the sabotages to your success so that you can continue your journey, and make it to the winners' circle. It is also important that you recognize when you are winning so that you will stay encouraged on your journey. There will be small successes that are not so recognizable and

“nothing to write home about,” and you might have a tendency to overlook them, especially when you are feeling discouraged. These are your successes and you need to embrace them as well. Last, I wrote this book to tell you that you are not alone on your journey. There is always someone for you to cry out to and His name is Jesus and He is the only reason that I’m in the winners’ circle today. Without the involvement of the Holy Spirit in my life, I would still be captive to my appetite and suffering the effects of it in my body. There are many wonderful, scientific, technical books that are available on nutrition that share information on the science of your body and the science of nutrition. I highly recommend reading these books in order to get the education you need to maintain your wellness or to regain your health.

- You need to know the importance of eating more foods with high water content (Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, *Fit for Life*, pg. 34-45).
- You need to know the cycles of your digestive system and why it is important not to eat after 8 p.m. For example, in *Fit for Life*, Harvey and Marilyn Diamond write about the natural body cycles and states “that regular human’s ability to deal with food relies on the effective functioning of three regular daily cycles: Noon to 8 P.M.—Appropriation (eating and digestion), 8P.M. to 4 A.M.—Assimilation (absorption and use), 4 A.M. to noon—Elimination (of body wastes and food debris).” In *Fit for Life*, the Diamonds point out the importance of facilitating the elimination phase of our natural body cycles.
- You need to know that “It is not only what you eat that makes the difference but, also of extreme importance is when you eat it and in what combination.” Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, *Fit for Life*, Pg. 6),
- You need to know that your body is more diseased in an acid state, a body PH less than seven and you need to know what foods keep your body in an alkaline state, a body PH greater than seven, which is the state of wellness.

Books on these topics are extensive and the online information is enormous in response to a nation that is in a health crisis. It can be a little confusing and overwhelming. To help you narrow your search and lessen the confusion, at the end this book I have included a few websites, books and CDs that have helped me tremendously in my journey. I trust that they will help you as well. The books, *Perfect Weight America*, and *The Maker’s Diet* are must reads because they explain in simple language the information that you need in order to win in the area of nutrition. “You will learn what to eat, when to

eat, how to cheat right, which foods can add fat, and which foods can help it disappear. You will discover which foods make you hungry and which foods make you full; you will also learn about the importance of cleansing your body and the how-to steps of achieving those results” (Rubin Jordan, *Perfect Weight America*). You need to have these books in your library and incorporate them into your lifestyle. The CD (and it is available in book form also) *The Power of Vision*, by Dr. Myles Munroe, Founder and Senior Pastor of Bahamas Faith Ministries International, is also a must have CD or book. He does an excellent job in explaining how Vision drives every decision that we make. It is so important, on your nutritional journey, that you have a weight goal and a vision of how you want to look. This vision will have a direct impact on the choices you make. It is difficult for me to label one book or one CD as more necessary than the others, because they all work together exceptionally well in helping you to understand the victory you have in Christ and what is necessary for you to maintain your wellness or to regain your health so that you can successfully live out God’s plan for your life. I encourage you to make it a point to acquire all the resources and saturate yourself with the information on a daily basis until you are walking in your place of victory.

Chapter 1

A JOURNEY OF MISTAKES

In the introduction, I mentioned rebellion as an aspect of my journey. Let me explain why. Over ten years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me: ‘Nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables.’ I didn’t receive what He said. I couldn’t receive what He said. I refused to receive what He said. You see, I loved to eat. I mean, *I loved* to eat! It was my passion. In fact, food was my drug of choice. From my early childhood it was my constant companion, my friend, my part-time lover. It filled a void in my life when I didn’t allow the Holy Spirit to heal a hurt. Instead of turning to God to heal me, I turned to food to pacify me. When the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me: ‘Nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables’, my life was over! Or so I thought. In hind sight, God was giving me an invitation to live—He was calling me away from destructive eating habits and poor food choices to embrace His nutritional plan for my wellbeing. I “reasoned” with myself: How can God ask me to do something that was totally impossible for me to do, and how could he ask me to do something that I was totally unwilling to do? I actually thought I had an opinion in the matter. Subsequently, I made a few mistakes on my journey.

My first mistake on this journey: I reasoned with myself. There is a scripture in the bible that give instructions regarding whose counsel to trust: “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not to your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5). I suppose I thought that my understanding was greater than God’s. God is all knowing and knew my frame quite well. He knew what was best for me. He knew my future and was warning me to change my nutritional course. God is in eternity unrestrained by time and therefore knows the future, and He knew my outcome. Therefore, He could counsel me regarding my life. On the CD, *The Power of Vision*, Dr. Myles Munroe talks about the omnipresent character of God. He first of all defines Vision as being “An internalized clear mental picture of a preferable future. Here is the future I prefer.” He further explains that “The preferable future is a direct result of God imparting through inspiration” and that “God never deals with the present because the present is already history to God.” He said When God speaks, “He speaks to the future—never to your past and never to your present.” **God speaks to your future.** When this happens to you if it hasn’t already, don’t reject God’s counsel. It is His love reaching out to you. If he tells you to give up something it is because He already knows how this thing impacts your future. He is giving you the information you need so that you can adjust some things in your life to achieve a desirable outcome. It is His way of trying to get something else, something better to you—a new job, better finances, the right mate, right friends, or his rescue plan for your well-being. When God spoke those words to me over ten years ago, “*nuts, grains,*

fruits and vegetables,” I did not realize it at that time but He was speaking to my future. He knew my future and knew that my present nutritional course was toxic to my wellbeing.

My second mistake on this journey: Forgetting that I was never alone. God knew my pitiful state; He knew my weakness. And I’ve since learned, He was not asking me to do it alone. I just failed to wait around to hear Him say, “My child, I’m with you and will assist you. All I need is for you to agree with me and cooperate with me.”

My third mistake on this journey: I failed to realize that it was never about food. It was about the loving Father caring for His child’s well-being and He was giving me an invitation to come back to Him. It was about getting rid of the hindrances and distractions that prevented me from developing a more intimate relationship with Him. It was about the generation of lives that I would one day touch so that He could get the glory out of those lives. It was about the disruption in my children’s lives and the impact a diseased or dead mom would have on their lives. It had to do with the promises from His Word that He made to me regarding long life. It was about a loving and faithful Father watching over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). One aspect of God’s character is that He is faithful. He came and rescued me because He is faithful, and He loves me. I have found no better friend than Jesus. He, indeed, “sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

My fourth mistake on this journey: I stopped fearing God. This is the very reason my journey took so long. I stopped standing in awe of God. This is a serious and dangerous mistake.

When I heard the words “*nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables,*” I thought to myself, there is no way I can live without McDonald’s, Portillo’s, KFC, Wendy’s, Burger King, Taco Bell, fried chicken, fried pork chops, catfish(fried of course), ribs, fries, macaroni and cheese, cakes, pies, ice cream, milk shakes, corn bread, hot dogs (the plump when you cook them kind), ham hocks, fat back or bacon in my greens and beans, and pizza loaded with cheese. These foods were consumed in large portions—each meal, all day, seven days a week. The battle had begun. There was no way I was going to live the way God counseled me to live. Only God knew I wasn’t really living. I was headed for a health crisis unknown to me at that time. And most likely, premature death, following in the footsteps of my mother who died at the age of forty-four of a heart attack precipitated by obesity and its constant companions high blood pressure and diabetes. These foods were my constant, familiar “friends,” and I could not think of living without them or eating less of them, or not eating them on a daily basis, or not eating them at all. This is

where I dwelled. My family identity was tied to these foods. Many of my precious family memories were tied to these foods. I went through a period where I wasn't God's friend anymore because He was messing with my life: My life of overeating, my life of loving food more than I loved Him, my life of gluttony, my life of dishonoring His temple to the point of God not having a temple to reside in was a very real threat. What I refused to realize—and these are some of the things I share in my “nuggets” is that, all God wanted to do was love me, protect me, rescue me, and bring me back to Him. Because of my insatiable appetite, I had drifted. My affections had drifted and I lost my will. I had no strength of will on my own to come back to God. The Holy Spirit worked overtime to bring me back to God. *I will never forget the time I struggled so miserably in trying to eat right and please God.* It was a pathetic sight. I could only fast an hour before I was making a path to the refrigerator. The Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “Your will is gone.” I thanked the Holy Spirit for this revelation and immediately sat out to correct the situation by making myself do what was right. If my will was gone then I would practice and practice until I got it back. This did not work and at this point in my life, I desperately tried to do what God required of me but I could not. Something held me hostage. I could not explain why I kept failing. Finally, after days of failed attempts, The Holy Spirit spoke to me again, in a somewhat exasperated voice and said, “You don't even know what it means.” He was right. I didn't. I immediately got a dictionary and looked up the meaning of the word “will.” Webster's New Collegiate dictionary defines “will” as appetite, passion, the power or control over one's actions or emotions. My understanding opened up. A light bulb went on inside of my head. I finally understood the problem. There was a reason why I was a miserable failure in my attempts to eat right. Somewhere, a long time ago, I gave my affections away to other things, food. It became my comforter and my secret lover and over a period of time, and I am shamefully saying this, my belly had become my god. It controlled me and it called the shots. Jesus was no longer the object of my affections. He no longer had complete control over my heart. We can give our affections or our will away to many things and because it is so siddle, we are unaware that we have drifted and our affections cooled toward the things of God. Some of us have given our affections away to drugs, pornography and other sexual lusts, gambling, fast foods, etc. Once I understood what I was dealing with, I was able to find scriptures to strengthen me and to back me up. I share those scripture with you in a prayer at the end of this book. God's word is power. It is a life force and it will deliver you. Word of caution: It is not a one person fight. You have to get in the ring and cooperate with the leading of the Holy Spirit and yield to what He tells you.

I encourage you to take a brief moment and ask yourself, ‘what has caused my affections to drift?’ ‘What has my heart?’ ‘What has my will (mind, soul, emotions and passions)?’ Is it food? Is it drugs? Is it greed? Pursuing the blessing as opposed to pursuing God? **As for me, it was food that caused my affections to drift and capture my will. I had another lover, but this lover was killing me; he meant me no good.** God was saying to me, ‘Other things have your affection and I need all of you. Unless I have all of you, you are of no benefit to me.’ He was also saying to me, ‘If you are to enter the promise land that I have in store for you, if you are going to answer the call I have on your life, if you are going to live out the time I promised you in my Word, **then I require of you to live a more disciplined life.** I need to know if I have all of your heart. I need to know if I can trust you.’ **God loved me and wanted me well to enjoy the life He promised me in His word; and He was inviting me to have a more intimate relationship with Him and all I could see at that time was what I had to give up to gain Him.** I honestly wrestled with whom or what I thought was more important.

I spent years resisting the Holy Spirit’s leading: Playing games, pretending to want to be free, but not really. And ultimately, I was blatantly rebelling. No matter how we look at it, if we are not working with Him, we are against Him (paraphrased Matthew 12:30). That’s rebellion. God was so patient with me. He never stopped loving me, and He never changed His mind about me. He did, however, speak to me during this time and said “It’s my way or no way.” A few years ago I came to realize that I would never enter the promised land unless I gave God what He asked of me, that I would die in the wilderness, both physically and spiritually, and there was nothing God could do about it but see me self destruct because I had drifted away from His loving arms. I rebelled against His authority. I had become borderline diabetic and developed high blood pressure. I weighted 205 lbs. with a short height of 5’3 ½”. That was too much weight for such a short frame and my weight would have increased had God not intervened. I was slowly killing myself with food and had begun to buy plus size clothes to accommodate my growing frame. I came to the realization that there was no way God was going to bless me with much if He could not trust me because food had my affection (**and not just food but foods that were toxic to my wellbeing**). And I also realized that there was no way God could use me, because I would be either dead or too diseased to answer His call. **I also thought about my children—of the void that my death would leave in their lives if I did not change.**

Chapter 2

REFUSE TO BE A SHEEP

I was and am a registered nurse, taking care of the sick and dying and still blinded to what was harming me. I lied to myself, thinking that this could never happen to me because, after all, I had God. Even though I refused His counsel, He would still find a way to protect me. **What I failed to recognize was that God's protection was in His counsel.** Foolishly, I prayed over my ham hocks, fat back and bacon, pork rinds, potato chips, cheetos, donuts, cookies and ice cream and asked God to remove all impurities. I had those foods covered in the blood. These foods were my dwelling place. Sad and embarrassed to say, they had become my best friend. I didn't visit them every now and then; I lived in them and I lived for them, on a daily basis, each meal, and many times in the middle of the night. **Sometimes we, God's people, act like sheep being lead to the slaughter** (Psalm 44:22). Sheep are oblivious as to where they are going. They don't know that they are inches away from death or major life changing health challenges. But we, as God's people, are far superior to sheep. We need to appreciate and esteem the value God has placed in us. "He has placed heavenly treasure," His Word and His Spirit "In earthly vessels," his children, "so that everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not our own" (2 Corinthians 4:7). The eternal God has imparted to us His divine nature. He has given us the Authority to use the name that is greater than every name and every situation. The blood Jesus shed for us on the cross secured our eternal wellbeing. And lastly, Jesus gave us a great mission. He said, "Go ye, into the entire world and make disciples of all men" (Matthew 28:19). But how can we "go" if we are not well? How can we "go," if we continue to allow our food choices to put our bodies in a diseased state? Our actions and our choices should reflect the revelation that we have knowledge of who we are in Christ and that includes right actions and right choices in the area of nutrition simply because of what it means to God. **Good nutrition is an expression of gratitude.** It honors God, and says to Him: I understand and appreciate the gift of life that you have given me. I understand the price you paid for me and I understand the value you placed on me and the treasure you placed within me. I understand the scope of my mission and I accept the charge that you have given me to "go." I will eat so that I am physically able to "go." I accept your invitation of a closer, more intimate relationship.

For those of us who do know the nutritional truth but are unwilling to put in the work that is necessary to affect a change, you have, in effect, made the decision that you would rather be sick and die early than to do what it takes to be well. I have heard this comment often, "I'm going to die from

something anyway so I might as well be happy.” You are the group of people who have not fully comprehended the significance of the cross. You don’t fully grasp that God has placed “heavenly treasure in earthly vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). God has revealed to you the mystery of His Kingdom. He has planted His Word in you so that you can present the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved. He created you to be the light that shines in a dark world. He has given you His Spirit and called you His children so that you might live to bring glory to His Son. God’s plan is not for you to “die of something anyway”. God is calling you to be a winner and to be a witness for Him. **Realize that you are to be well. Well is what God intended.** Psalms 91:16 states that “With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.” This other state of being—sickness and disease—was never intended to be a way of life for God’s people, but we’re not asking the right questions. We are not making the right choices when it comes to our eating habits, food choices, and physical exercise. The Bible gives many scripture references to God’s plan for our wellness, if only we would follow His plan. I have included in the back of this book scriptures of prayer that has helped me in my weakest hour, I pray that they will be a blessing to you as well.

Chapter 3

AN APPEAL TO EMBRACE WISDOM

Wisdom is simply God's way of doing things, and God has made it available to each of us. As a matter of fact, we are encouraged to ask for Wisdom, and the Word tells us that God will give it to us (James 1:5). Let's begin to apply Wisdom and common sense in our food choices. Proverbs 1:20-21 says this, "Wisdom calls aloud in the street. She raises her voice in the public square. She calls out to the crowd along the main street, and to those in front of city hall." Verse 23 continues the appeal to embrace wisdom—"Come here and listen to me! I'll pour out the spirit of wisdom upon you and make you wise." We need to embrace her (Wisdom) if we are to get free from destructive eating habits so that we can live the long life God promises us in His Word and, not only his promise to live long, but to live well. I strongly encourage you to read and study Proverbs chapters 1-4 so that you may understand the importance of walking in wisdom. I also strongly encourage you to read the recommended reading and listen to the audio information listed at the end of this book so you can begin your journey of obtaining the knowledge you need to overcome in the area of nutrition for your well-being and for the Glory of God (see Isaiah 43:7, Psalms 29:1). Allow me to make one more plea in favor of walking in wisdom: We give good care to our vehicle so that we can extend its life. We know that each compartment of the engine require specific substances in order to function properly and we give those compartments what is needed to keep the car running smoothly. Yet, we as God's people have been gifted with a body to live in, but we don't know how it works. We don't give it the proper nutrition to extend its life. **If you give your car what it requires to run effectively, why not give your body what it requires to live?**

Chapter 4

IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST: REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE AND IN WHOM YOU SERVE

Don't forget your identity. I think that we have forgotten that we are God's children. He created us. We were redeemed from sin (separation from God spiritually) and reconciled to God through the sacrifice of the cross. Our true identity is revealed in Christ. We need to identify with Him and that includes identifying with the foods that have a high approval rating from God. Yes, God does have a dietary plan for His children's well-being. He made us and He knows what is required to sustain our physical health. Let me share a secret: *"If you want to change someone's loyalty and identity, start off by changing their name, then change their clothes, and finally, change the way they eat, these three components are very effective in causing a people to forget their identity"* (Life Application). Get acquainted again with "Who you are and in whom you serve" (Acts 27:23). To better understand this concept, read the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament and focus on chapters one and two which identify four young men, whom, even though they were taken into captivity, predetermined in their hearts that they would keep their allegiance to God and would not eat the king's food that was rich and unhealthy and the complete opposite of what God had commanded them to eat. Even though the king of the Babylonian empire sought to change their loyalty by changing their name, their clothing and their food choices, these four young men continued to identify with God and His way of life for their well-being. They did not give in to the culture around them. Our identity can be challenged and even lost because we give in to the culture around us. Many of our health challenges come as a result of our giving in to the food culture around us. Experts say that "70% of premature deaths are caused by poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use (National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, 2005). That means that those people could be alive today had they changed their diet, engaged in some type of physical exercise and did not smoke. I could tell you many stories of those individuals of whom I have cared for over the past twenty-six years and whose source of illness were derived from their eating habits and lack of physical exercise. Many of these individuals died or their health remained compromised because they refused to see the connection between nutrition and health. If they did see the connection between nutrition and health, they were so bound by their appetites that they were unwilling to put in the work it took to make the change. The present culture and in particular, the present food culture is toxic to our well-being especially in the absence of little or no intake of the recommended daily allowance of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and physical inactivity. I appeal to you to re-evaluate your life style, including your eating habits, and make the necessary adjustments for

your well-being and for the glory of God. Make the adjustment so that you can pass on a legacy of health to your children. If you live in a rural area, get back to some old fashion pesticide and chemical free farming. If you are in the city, seek out whole food markets. Turn a portion of your yard into a garden. Develop an exercise regimen. The recommended resources at the end of this book share information on where you can buy whole foods that are pesticide and chemical free.

Chapter 5

A CLARION CALL

As I'm writing this book, I feel like this is a clarion call to God's people who are held captive to their appetites. I feel so strongly to say, **God wants His people back.** Back from captivity from where our appetites have lead us. Back from obesity. Back from the spirit of gluttony. Back from high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, gout, arthritis, strokes, and cancer. The list is, unfortunately, endless. Like most of God's children, I had made my belly my god. My stomach called the shots and scripture tells us that we "cannot serve two masters." (Matthew 6:24). There are foods that you will read about later, that I call Red Flag Foods (foods that I have to avoid at all cost) because they had such a hold on my affections. Even now, one touch on the taste buds, all the old memories and affections come flooding back. I had such a soul tie with these foods that I became emotionally and physically addicted to them. They are kryptonite to me. As a result, I have had to make a decision to live my life without them because what I gain by giving them up is far greater than what I would get if I held onto them.

I have often paused and wondered while writing this book if I really wanted to share such a character flaw of myself. I thought, what would my fellow nurses think those who have held such high opinions of me? What would my fellow church-goers think those who view me as solid for the Lord? To be honest, I have felt a tad bit embarrassed in realizing that old spiritual me didn't quite have it all together after all. In spite of thinking all of the above thoughts, I have decided that I have seen enough physical devastation of God's people that I can no longer hold my peace nor can I keep secret what God has done for me. **My heart's response to the love He has shown me is: I have to try to reach His people—my beloved sisters and brothers in Christ.** The reward of seeing you set free from destructive eating habits far outweighs any embarrassment I might be experiencing. My appeal to you is from my heart as I share from my personal experience. I'm not writing this from any scientific, medical researched point of view and the reason being, as I shared earlier is, it doesn't matter what expert advice or information is given. If you are not able to walk it out, the information will lay dormant on the pages of the book, never impacting your life. My deepest desire is that you will successfully walk it out, nutritionally speaking, and walk into the winners' circle.

Chapter 6

NUTRITIONAL NUGGETS

“While it is wise to learn from experience, it is wiser to learn from the experience of others” (The Purpose Driven Life).

“Everything is permissible—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible—but not everything is constructive” (good for me to do) (1Corinthians 10:23).

Psalms 116:15—The Lord’s love ones are precious to Him; it grieves Him when they die. God has counted our lives as precious and he carefully watches over us. God doesn’t take the dying of His people lightly, or them falling prey to sickness and disease. It is of great concern to Him that you are overweight and continue to make poor food choices. Your eating right and living well matters to God. Therefore, take your nutrition seriously. Walk in wisdom, which is simply the application of knowledge and doing things God’s way. Simply apply what you have learned and what you will learn. **We seem to apply wisdom to most areas of our lives except when it comes to nutrition.** We seem to think that we can eat or drink anything and still remain healthy or regain our health. I used to say to my patients “You wouldn’t put salt into a gas tank and expect your vehicle to run—why then would you eat or drink anything and expect to maintain a state of wellness?” This is what Proverbs 4:10-13 says about wisdom: “My child, listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life. I will teach you wisdom’s ways and lead you in straight paths. If you lead a life guided by wisdom, you won’t limp or stumble as you run. Carry out my instructions; don’t forsake them. Guard them, for they will lead you to a fulfilled life.” David Bjerklie, Senior Reporter, Time Magazine had this to say about the power of good nutrition: “The news isn’t that fruits and vegetables are good for you, it’s that they are so good for you they can save your life” (TIME Magazine, October 20, 2003). “...We are fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalms 139:14) both spiritually and physically. Our spirit man cannot survive without spiritual food, the Word of God. Our physical bodies will give out earlier than God’s appointed time without proper care. Our bodies will have a difficult time surviving without nutrients that are found only in real food—whole foods that are loaded with antioxidants and other phytonutrients that are so needed in neutralizing free radicals, decreasing your chances of developing cancer and boosting your immune system. All of this will make sense and will come together as you embark on your educational journey. ***Proverbs 26:2: “...The curse does not come without a cause.”*** There is a reason why sickness and disease occurs. We need to ask the right questions and make the right food choices.

Palms 91: *“I will satisfy you with long life and show you my salvation.”* You are not supposed to be taken out early. God wants to satisfy you with a long life, but He needs your cooperation.

What you eat matters. Expecting to get sick at some point in your life and living with sickness and disease is a mindset that we have been brainwashed to accept as part of life. Likewise, we have been brainwashed to accept debt and credit as a lifestyle. Neither plan is acceptable in the Kingdom of God. We have to get back to God’s plan for our finances and back to God’s plan for our nutrition in order to regain and maintain our health.

“Are you investing in your Wellness or are you subsidizing your Illness?”(Mitra Ray, PhD, Research Biologist). What are you doing to improve your overall wellbeing? Are you exercising to lose weight or you making excuses as to why you can’t fit exercise into your daily schedule? Are you cooking nutritious meals at home and thus decreasing, with the goal of eliminating, the trips to the fast foods restaurants? Do you understand the need to take whole food nutrients as oppose to mega doses of vitamins? Whole food nutrients, pesticide free fruits, vegetables and organic meat products might be a little bit costly but what about the cost and inconvenience of trying to get well? You either pay now for prevention or pay later trying to get well. Refuse to use the excuse, “It’s too expensive.” Find a way to cut out waste in your budget and redirect your money to purchase whole organic foods and whole food nutrients, not mega doses of vitamins. Isolated, mega doses of vitamins can never give you what God intended to give you from nature. Develop an exercise regimen. Start out by doing ten minutes a day if that is all you can commit to doing and in time build on that (it is always best to check with your doctor before starting any type of physical exercise, especially if your health is already compromised).

Take the time to learn the difference between mega vitamins and whole food nutrients and why you need to know the truth.

Learn to read food labels. If you don’t recognize the ingredients or can’t pronounce the ingredients, don’t buy it. Give your body food that your cells recognize and can actually use.

Avoid foods or eat them in a very limited amount that spike your blood sugar, increase fat storage, and keep your body in an acid state, the state of disease: Pizzas with a lot of cheese and sausage, which translated, means high saturated fat and high salt contents; fried foods, sugary sodas, white carbohydrates, processed foods and desserts with white refined sugar. When you eat carbohydrates for example, your body breaks down this food into digestible sugars called glucose so that your cells can use it for energy. This process is a good thing but could be more effective if we actually gave the body food that promoted wellness. Your pancreas responds to the digestible glucose by secreting insulin

which causes your cells to absorb the glucose. A situation that occurs, though, is when your pancreas is no longer able to secrete enough insulin to absorb the glucose into your cells (Google www.howfatcellswork.com). The above mentioned foods cause a continuous rise in your blood sugar and overtime overwork the pancreas and basically wear it out (you become insulin resistance). When this happens, your pancreas is no longer able to produce the insulin that is needed to absorb the glucose into your cells. If your pancreas cannot secrete enough insulin, the increased glucose in your blood has to go somewhere. It finds its way to your blood vessels and cause damage to the lining of your blood vessels or causes a plaque build-up in your arteries—clogging or narrowing your arteries—especially the major blood vessels that are responsible for carrying blood to your heart and brain. This process leads to coronary artery disease. If the heart can't get enough oxygen filled blood it cannot function at full capacity. The heart muscles will die because of a diminished blood flow. This process eventually leads to a heart attack. If your arteries are clogged or narrowed because of plaque buildup, the heart has to pump harder to get the blood through your arteries. This overworks the heart. This process eventually leads to heart failure. Blood pressure is a measure of the amount of resistance the heart encounters as it pumps blood through your arteries. The higher the resistance, the higher the blood pressure—this process is called hypertension (www.americanheartassociation.org). If your brain cannot get enough oxygen-filled blood, a stroke can occur. Insulin also assists in the process of converting excess glucose into fat. The more white carbohydrates, white refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup, processed and fried foods that you eat, the more fat is stored, especially in the absence of exercise (Google www.howfatcellswork.com). Imagine this cycle repeating itself over and over again in your body for a prolonged period of time. What I have described above are the beginnings of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, kidney failure and eventually a stroke or heart attack and maybe death. Other disease processes can occur as well because now your body is in an acid state, the state where disease flourishes—all as a result of poor food choices and out of control eating habits. Eat foods that have a low glycemic index such as brown rice, 100% whole wheat bread, steel-cut oatmeal, beans, fresh fruit and vegetables, and raw nuts (and eat these in moderation-even a good thing can become bad if done in excess). Bake instead of frying. Eat wild caught fish. These foods metabolize slowly, resulting in a slow rise in blood sugar and they make you feel full longer-so you eat less. Learn to choose and eat foods that promote wellness—learn to eat on purpose.

Take the time to prepare your meals from fresh ingredients or dried ingredients like herbs and spices. Presoaking and cooking dry beans vs. can beans for chili, fresh greens if possible, and frozen

vegetables as a last resort. Try to avoid or limit the use of canned and bottled products as they tend to be high in salt and preservatives. Look at the ingredients on the commercial season packets, for example, then buy those ingredients and add them to the dish yourself. **You can** learn to mimic those ingredients instead of using the commercial packets that have a high salt content and chemical additives. **You can** do that with a lot of commercial season packets. **You can** make your own barbeque sauce from organic sources. I'm still working out this one. Practice makes perfect.

God didn't make the world in one day; He could have because He's God. He deliberately took six days to make the world and rested on the seventh day. We can learn something from this. Don't be in a hurry to see results. Don't try to make lasting changes overnight. Don't try to lose five pounds in one exercise routine. Don't set yourself up for failure. Make small changes in your diet over a period of time as you will be more likely to accept the changes and will be successful in maintaining those changes. If you are used to drinking three colas a day, cut down to two a day for two weeks or even 30 days—then repeat the process until you are cola free. Make a sandwich out of one slice of bread instead of two. Do what you are comfortable with and are willing to maintain. The key is consistency—no highs or lows—just consistency. Consistency in good food choices—consistency in exercise and consistency in portion control. If you are not sure what constitutes portion control, as a gauge practice eating until you are satisfied; then eat no more. Eat six small meals throughout the day instead of eating three large meals. Learn to graze, instead of eating large meals. If you are used to eating out of control, this will take a little time to implement, **but you can do it**. The key is consistency and the desire to win. Ask God to give you the desire to win (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Talk to God about your struggles. Be honest with Him. He knows what you are going through. He knows that you love food more than you love His Word. That's ok. God can handle this kind of competition for your affections. He is jealous for your affections, but He's patient. Don't worry. He's more committed to you and your success than you are to Him at this stage in your life. He never looks at your failures and holds them against you. What interests Him more is who you shall become. Not who you are at the moment. So stop beating yourself up. You're ok. You are still growing up in this area. That's ok. Just keep your heart honest and sincere before God, and He will help you to overcome your area of weakness. You don't have to get free in your own strength. God will draw you near to Him. He will help you choose Him. He just wants you to agree with Him and admit your need for help. One tiny bit of caution though, "If God is talking to you and has already talked to you concerning your eating habits or any other habits or sin in your life, and you have continuously, deliberately ignored

Him, let me point out that “self correction is better than God’s correction.” Let me repeat this. It is far better for you to correct an action out of obedience and love than to have God correct you.

Deliberately eat fermented or cultured foods like yogurts, kefir milk, and buttermilk from organic sources. Stay away from the commercial brands as they are high in refined sugar and other additives that you cannot pronounce. Soak your beans or rice (look up the word phytates on the internet to better understand this concept.) Take the time to research the importance of eating fermented foods. The books *Perfect Weight America* and *The Maker’s Diet* will help you understand the importance of fermented foods.

Make your own. “Spice up your meals with naturally fermented relishes and condiments instead of sugary sauce substitutes. It can spare you the misery of, or help you recover from a debilitating disease or health crises such as arthritis, cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart attack and stroke” (Rubin Jordan, *The Maker’s Diet*, pg. 40). You can find natural made products that are low in salt at your local whole food market. You can make your own barbeque sauce from natural ingredients instead of buying the commercial brand that’s loaded with fructose corn syrup and other unhealthy additives.

Ask yourself, “What am I willing to give up in order to get what I want?” Sometimes our flesh can be quite demanding. In fact, it can scream rather loudly suggesting that you have an obligation to it. As if to say, “How dare you deprive me of what I am craving.” There will be times when you can’t fight this on your own. This will be a good time to dig deep and say with conviction, “I owe my flesh nothing and God everything” (Romans 8:1-14).

Let go of anything and everything that is harming you. Obesity is what you are experiencing now. It’s not who you are. It is not your friend. Stop treating it like it’s your best buddy. It is betraying you. Don’t be afraid to let it go.

Get a vision for how you want to look, and how you would like to dress. See yourself looking that way. Habakkuk 2:2 talks about “writing the vision on tablets.” Rewrite your life goals; include in them your weight loss plan. My rewritten life goals include a weight loss of 2 lbs. per week. “Even though the vision might tarry, be delayed, wait on it (work towards it), and it will surely come” (Habakkuk 2:2, 3).

Along with your weight goal and vision for your life, you will need a large dose of commitment— don’t let this word frighten you. You can obtain it and walk in it. Lack of commitment and the hard work that goes into disciplining your flesh may have been some of the main reasons that you have failed in the past. Sometimes we fail without examining why. It is like this big mystery looms over us and we

can't figure out why we aren't winning. Commitment to a lifestyle change to be healthy as opposed to dieting to lose weight is one of the keys to your winning. If you lack commitment, ask God to help you. You are never alone on this journey. God answers heartfelt, sincere prayer—just don't quit on yourself or God while you are working this out. Changing a lifetime of wrong food choices and wrong habits will not disappear overnight. However, is it not an excuse to remain where you are. **Keep your heart sincere before God and cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and He will bring you to a place of victory. Don't be afraid to win.** If you are used to losing the battle with your weight, don't sabotage your success once you get on the right track. Become comfortable with the idea of winning and make a commitment to stay the distance until you reach your goal.

Give yourself permission to win. It's ok to be successful, to look good. This is one of the few times that you can be selfish, but do it to the glory of God.

The feeling of losing weight, for those who are not used to it, is a good feeling. And at the same time it's almost an uneasy feeling of losing something: Obesity, that old familiar “friend.” For a moment you might toy with the idea of holding on to your old “friend,” because it's familiar. Don't. Let your old “friend” go and embrace your new friend, weight loss and its companion, healthy lifestyle. Be careful of your actions during this time. Make sure they are directed toward supporting your new friend, weight loss and healthy living.

“Get free from old destructive habits by simply forming new ones” (Joyce Meyer, *Starting Your Day Right*, pg. 241)—add more raw nuts, grains, fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet. Bake instead of frying. I make a mean oven fried chicken, and it works for oven fried fish as well. Debone your chicken breasts or chicken thighs or buy them already deboned and sauté them in a small amount of oil, about 2-3 Tbs., instead of deep frying (flour coating is not necessary). Deliberately eat fish twice a week, the kind of fish that have scales and fins. Avoid the scavengers of the sea. If you are used to piling your plate up with food at dinner, change this habit. Put on your plate a sensible portion of food. Go back and get more if you need to. But caution, don't make too many extra trips otherwise you will find yourself back in the same predicament—overeating. **You will** eventually embrace these new habits. Start believing God and begin making confessions that you can afford to buy organic, pesticide free fruit and vegetables; range free chickens; grass fed beef, bison, lamb, and goat. **Take the money you spend on fast foods and put it towards buying organic foods.** If all you can afford at the moment is organic fruit, start there and be consistent. Show God and yourself that you mean business. God will take you on whatever level **you** choose. God will honor what you honor. He told me once, ‘Set your standard

and never live below it'. Make a decision regarding which standard you want; be sincere, be consistent.

You will get heaven's attention and **God will** back you up. **He wants you to win.**

Don't become discouraged; thinking it is taking too long to lose weight. Re-evaluate what you are doing. It is usually because you are too accommodating with wrong food choices, or your portions are too large, or you are snacking on the wrong foods or snacking too frequently, or not exercising. Make the necessary adjustments. If you order a pizza, learn to say, "Light on the cheese." Order a salad with your pizza or make your own salad, and then learn to eat a small portion of the pizza as a side with your salad. Don't make the pizza the main course, if you do, you will end up overeating.

If everyone in your family is ordering take out, and It's stuff that you really need to avoid, don't be brave thinking, "I'll just eat my home made salad and ignore what they are eating." Go ahead and order a salad for yourself so you don't feel left out. Eat a **tiny** amount of what they have if you need to so that you can move on. Eat your homemade salad another day. Sometimes you just have to be creative to make it through a rough spot. The key phrase here is "make it through." You have to overcome and keep moving if you want success. Old habits are hard to break, but they can be broken.

Take the time to learn the difference between good fats and bad fats. Take the time to learn about the destructive effects of white refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup, the harmful ingredient in most soft drinks and juices, on your immune system. Take the time to learn about free radicals and the role that antioxidants and phytonutrients, found in raw nuts, grains, fresh fruits and vegetables play in neutralizing those free radicals, enabling you to regain or maintain good health. We are in a technological age, with Information literally at our finger tips. We don't have to lose. By not taking advantage of the many resources available to us, we are choosing to lose, and I personally think it is because we do not really comprehend the price that was paid for us and the value God placed in us. He does not have a backup plan. We are His plan to carry the Gospel to the world; so make the necessary changes and live out God's plan for your life.

There is a T.V. show called What Not to Wear. Challenge yourself. Take the time to learn about WHAT NOT TO EAT. But remember, keep all things in perspective. God is a God of do. Not a God of don't. Do eat. But eat the right foods. It is not about what you can't eat; it's about what you should eat.

When it's all said and done, it is really a matter of obedience. Do we obey God and follow his plan for our wellbeing or do we sow to the flesh and make our bellies our god? Speaking as a nurse for the past twenty-six years, sowing to the flesh is not worth it. You do reap what is sown. Start sowing good

nutritional seeds into your body and into the lives of your children so that down the road, you and your children will reap a harvest of good health or at the least, improved health. It's never too late to start.

Do a makeover in your kitchen cabinets and refrigerator, nutritionally speaking. Replace white rice with brown. Replace white pancake batter with 100% whole wheat pancake batter. Buy 100% real maple syrup that has been minimally processed at low temperature as to preserve the natural nutrients instead of the high fructose, commercial brand that has no nutritional value—none at all. Buy free range eggs that are high in omega 3. Buy crackers and bread without trans fatty acids or hydrogenated oil. You will have to purchase most of these items at a whole food market. Buy food with ingredients that you recognize and can pronounce. Buy raw honey instead of the over-processed commercial brand that has destroyed all the natural nutrients in the processing. **These items are a bit pricey, but you and your family are worth it. See it as an investment in the Kingdom.** Your family might not understand or appreciate the changes that you make at first, but slowly make those changes, one at a time. They will eventually begin to see your progress and will become your biggest cheerleaders, and will begin to embrace the healthy meals you prepare. It might not happen overnight, but hang in there and lovingly make those changes. If this does not happen for you, (Thank the Lord, it happened for me. However, every now and then I have to deal with mutiny), find a way to fight for the lifestyle that you know God created you and your family to have.

If you are the only one with a weight issue in your home, in all likelihood you have experienced endearing titles that your family has lovingly given you. Words of caution, don't accept the endearing titles. Mine was old, country big mama. I resisted that title largely because I knew, in Christ I was a winner. Even with my weight problems and affections for the wrong foods, deep down, I knew that I was part of a winning team. I began to speak aloud to my family, for example, when one of my daughters in a very loving way, would come up to me, throw her arms around me and say, "My old, country big mama." I began to say to her, very politely, "Your old, country skinny mama." "You have to call those things that are not, as though they were" (Hebrews 11:1). **Keep on confessing your desired goal, you will start to believe it, and you will get a vision of what you desire to be.** But remember "faith without works is dead faith" (James 2:17-18). Put action behind your confession. Make the necessary changes or adjustments that you need to make.

Confront why food is tied to your emotions, and deliberately work through this. I now understand why food held me hostage for years. It appeared to be the answer to all of my problems but solved none

of them. It appeared to be a comforter, when in effect, its end result was to bring devastating discomfort.

Don't be lead by your emotions—make choices instead. Really focus and ask yourself, why do I want to eat this? Am I hungry or just anxious about something? If I am anxious about something, what is it? And is food the best way to deal with it? What am I trying to avoid or don't want to deal with? Is overeating the best use of my time, or could my time be spent doing something to really solve the problem. Maybe the situation just requires prayer and quiet time reading the Word. If it's anxiety or depression that's calling, don't answer it with food. This would be a good time to speak the Word, "I shall be anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6-7). Or, instead of being anxious, just say: "I will cast all of my cares on Him because He cares for me lovingly and watchfully" (1 Peter 5:6-8). Sometimes you just have to name those cares, one at a time, as you release them to God. You may need to do this several times a day or as long as it takes for this spirit of anxiety or depression or whatever the situation is to be broken off of you. God's word is a hammer that cracks the rock. It works. It's full of power and will rescue you. Whatever you are concerned about, whatever is making you anxious, or depressed, or sad, God will help you deal with it. Food is not your answer. Pursue Him and not food to console you. Get involved in other things to distract you. Join a bowling league, take up arts and crafts. Change your routine.

This is a very important nugget. Get to the place where you view wrong food choices and overeating as an enemy, not a friend.

Don't be afraid to weigh yourself. You might be pleasantly surprised that it is not as bad as you thought. If so, you can continue to do what you are doing in terms of losing weight. *You might see that it is bad* and that you need to stop what you are doing and get back on track. Weigh yourself once a week, at the beginning preferably, as a point to keep on track. **Your weigh-in can be a place of encouragement or a place of discouragement.** You decide. "We can choose to be pitiful or powerful" (Joyce Meyer, *Starting Your Day right*, 244). "I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy. 30:19). You do need to weigh yourself because **you need to know** if things are as bad as you think, and **you need to know** if you are reaching your goals.

Go clothes shopping. Not to buy, just to try on. It will encourage you to keep going, or it will snap you back into the reality of "I still have a way to go." Here again, this can be a place of encouragement or a place of discouragement. You have to decide which path to take.

What you focus on will develop. Focus on fast foods, potato chips, fries, fried chicken, white bread, white pasta, white flour, processed foods, donuts, cakes, pies, ribs, hot dogs, high fructose corn syrup “juices and sodas,” in conjunction with little or no exercise, eating heavy meals late at night, obesity and health challenges will develop. If you focus on good nutrition, whole organic foods: nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables, lean meats, fish, portion control, daily exercise, and avoid eating after 7pm weight loss and improved health will develop.

Don’t be afraid or discouraged if you can’t seem to win over your appetite or poor food choices.

Most commercial foods that you have been eating have preservatives and chemicals that are addictive. They have a power over you that you’re not aware of. It’s hard pulling away from something that you are addicted too. **Ask God to help you fight to get back your will** from these drugs, I mean high in sugar, trans-fat, hydrogenated oils, chemical additives, high fructose “foods.” If you have been trying and have failed again, don’t be discouraged and think that you have disappointed yourself and God again. He cares for you. If you will give him another chance, he will help you to win. Talk to God about your struggles. No one wants you to win more than Jesus. Just let Him help you. “Let Him” is a key phrase. **If you genuinely want to win in the area of your appetite, and are willing to follow God’s leading and apply wisdom in your food choices, you can win. Again, be willing to pay the price to win. It doesn’t come because you want it badly.** Winning comes when you begin to focus and begin to make right choices. Winning comes when you accept that your body is God’s temple and you need to treat it right in order for you to be healthy and to live long. Winning comes when you realize that good nutrition is an aspect of thanksgiving for the life that God has blessed you with.

We are supposed to be in good health. That is part of our inheritance in Christ. If good health is part of our inheritance in Christ, then where are we missing it? When we come into the Kingdom, do we discard nutritional wisdom and automatically walk divinely healed? We have Christ who is our healer therefore are we free to eat as we please because Jesus will fix it? Yes He can and yes He has. But we have to understand that *fixing it* also means He gives us wisdom to make right choices. When He gives us His counsel, He’s fixing it. We have to ask, how does this nutritional thing fit into God’s plan for my overall wellbeing and God’s plan for my life? How important is it to my living out my time on this planet? Would God give you earthly riches and then have you die early or become sick so that you cannot enjoy the manifestations of His blessings? These are some of the questions that we need to ask if we are to make a lifetime commitment to living a healthier life. **Before God made you, He had a well thought out plan for your eternal redemption and a well thought out plan for your walking in**

good health. Scripture tells us that God knew us before we were conceived in our mother's womb and that God even knows the number of hairs on our head (Psalms 139:1). The bible also tells us that we are wonderfully and fearfully made; I believe this to mean both spiritually, mentally and physically. If the God we serve is that knowledgeable and thorough in how he made us, would He leave our physical wellbeing up to chance? Of course not! God has a well thought out nutritional plan for us that is designed to maintain our wellness. We need only to seek out this plan and make room for it in our lives. Earlier, I wrote about refusing to be a sheep. You see, sheep don't ask questions. They just go on blindly, being led to their destruction. I will say this again, you are far superior to sheep. Ask questions. Obtain the knowledge you need to better understand how your body works and what fuel it needs in order to function properly. Be willing and committed to giving it the fuel it needs. This scenario amazes me and in time past, I was a victim to this scenario: We live in our body. It is our house. Yet we know very little about its function, and we neglect to care for it properly though we carry it around twenty-four/seven. We don't know what makes it tick, or we elect not to educate ourselves on the most magnificent machine ever created, our body—God's temple. I appeal to you again to embrace God's plan for your physical wellbeing. But be careful not to make food a yoke and a burden—"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Having shared that and being careful not to rewrite the Bible, let me point out that His Kingdom is about having discipline and self control and making right food choices especially if your health is being compromised. If you are obese and your health is being compromised, I can say with almost certainty that you are not living a life of goodness and peace. But you can live a life of goodness and peace if you make the choice and commitment to make room for God's nutritional plan in your life.

In the final analysis, God wants his children well. He is calling us to Kingdom Living and Kingdom Discipline. So, make those changes that you need to make and be consistent. Positive results will develop if you stay focused on your goal. Remember what develops when you get out of focus. Remember to eat whole foods, not something that has been processed in a factory and presented as food in your grocery stores. That stuff in the middle isles in your grocery store is not food, except for a few items. Eat food that is alive—living food: Raw nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables; protein from lean cuts of meats or from nonmeat sources, such as legumes and beans, dairy products that are low in saturated fats, such as low fat cottage cheese, Greek style yogurt and ricotta cheese, fiber from natural sources such as steel cut oats, 100% whole wheat, brown rice, monounsaturated fats found in olive oil,

most nuts, avocados and polyunsaturated fats (omega 3 and 6) such as found in salmon and tuna, flaxseed walnuts and soybeans.

This nugget bears repeating. When you have a tough struggle letting go of a certain food, understand that you're not hopeless. Understand that **your will is gone**, and you have to fight to get it back. And because these foods have such a hold on your affection, you literally have to wean yourself off of them. I'm talking about those foods that you eat and one touch on the taste bud will set off rockets inside of you. After having won the victory over these foods, do you really want to accommodate them again? (Galatians. 5:1)

Agree with God when he points out a weakness. Discovering a weakness is not a time for you to beat yourself up because you're not this perfect, spiritual powerhouse that you thought you were. Nor is it a time to tell God that He has made a mistake in His assessment of you. Just agree with God quickly. Surrender that area of weakness to Him, and He will teach you how to gain victory in that area. Quick agreement with God will save you a lot of heartache and pain, not to mention save you from a health crisis.

Recognize and know when to look up. Learn to turn your affections away from food and to fast if you are able to. If you can't fast food, fast something that you really, really, really enjoy or fast a piece of food, meat for example, and eat the rest of the meal. Learn to turn the plate over. You won't die of starvation. The hungry pains may suggest, very strongly, that you might be on the verge of passing away if you don't eat right now! You have to learn to "set your mind on things above, not on things that are in the earth" (Colossians 3: 2). Sometimes, you just have to say "no," I'm not eating this meal or I'm not eating today. "We really should fast at least one day a week anyway to give the body a chance to rest and restore itself." (Rubin Jordan, *The Maker's Diet*, 168).

Choose what pleases God (Isaiah 54:6). Don't do what you want to do or feel like doing. Do what is right. Do what will keep you winning. After coming home late at night from working the 3-11 shifts, your flesh tells you to eat an entire meal. After all, you had a rough night, and you deserve to pamper yourself. You also think, "If I eat, the tired feeling will go away." **Don't do it.** Eating will not make your tiredness go away. Once you eat, you will still be tired. Just eat the bare minimum to get you through. Eating nothing would be a better choice, but, if you are not willing to go there, eat the bare minimum, just to take the edge off. So eat a small piece of fruit, or one or two crackers, or a small amount of raw nuts, or ¼ cup of orange juice (learn to buy the not from concentrate kind, it's more natural). Don't do what you want to do and eat another meal—an entire sandwich, pizza slices...You

get the picture. Do what will cause you to win. Stay away from actions that will cause you to lose. It might be a struggle at first, but it is well worth the fight. Hang in there, and don't give up on yourself. Hard work pays off. Discipline brings success.

If you are at a dinner party, a church function, or even in your own kitchen and you have the opportunity to make a better food choice, make it. Don't fall back into the same old trap of wrong choices. At a gathering, for example, if the choices are not great, try to choose the least unhealthy choice. You will probably end up with a poor choice anyway, because there's not much to choose from, but at least your motives are right and you are not losing focus. You are winning the battle in your mind and in your spirit man, and you are maintaining your integrity. You are sincerely trying to keep your word to yourself. **Keeping your word to yourself and walking in integrity are very important.** "If you set a goal to do something, keep your word with yourself and do it! No matter what it takes, do it; don't lie to yourself." (Terri Savelle Foy, *Adventures in Faith*, May/June 2008, 3). If you can't keep your word to yourself, how can you keep your word to God? "... if you will practice having integrity with yourself then you'll have no problem believing in God's integrity" (Terri Savelle Foy, *Adventures in Faith*, May/June 2008, 3).

This nugget bears repeating. Keep your word to yourself, no matter what price you have to pay. Make daily and weekly goals and stick with them. My goal is to lose 2 lbs. per week. So far I have lost 35 lbs. It took me an entire year to lose 28 lbs., but I did it. If you do the math, by the end of the year, I should have lost pretty close to 100 lbs, but I'm not perfect, and neither are you. Give yourself room to make adjustments but be careful not to use this as a means to keep messing up. Watch your motives because when it comes to food; we can deceive ourselves. "The heart is deceptively wicked" (Mark 7:22). Romans 8:15 says, "Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature (the nature of gluttony), to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." Ask the Holy Spirit to help you win over your appetite. Be sincere in wanting to change and He will help you. You are never alone on this journey.

Remember moderation. Do not over indulge. Sometimes when we eat we think we need all of everything. As Joyce Meyer points out in her book, *Daily Devotions*, "we need some of everything, but not all of everything."

"If God can't trust you to control your own passions, then He can't trust you." "You have to strip off the old man with its lusts and affections, and put on the new man in Christ" (Colossians 3: 9, 10).

Prayer works. The Holy Spirit is available to assist you, to nudge you in the right direction, to counsel you, but you have to obey His leading and His counsel. **You have to do the stripping.** You have to say “no” to foods that you know are kryptonite to you, those foods that fight for your affection. You have to not buy the junk food when you go grocery shopping. You have to not go to the fast food restaurants. You have to choose wisely when you attend a dinner party. The Holy Spirit will help you see the truth, but you have to embrace the truth and say “No” to overeating and “No” to wrong food choices and mean it. Keep in mind that God is jealous for your affections and will not take second place.

Don’t seek fulfillment from other sources. If something is missing out of your life, let your relationship with Jesus fill the void, not other things and especially not food.

Recognize that you are in a spiritual fight as well as a physical fight. Not only are you fighting to regain or maintain your health, you are also waging a spiritual war against tradition, conformity, disobedience, and rebellion. The eating habits you have right now were passed down to you. They are the habits of your ancestors and you have simply carried on the tradition without giving little thought to its affect on your wellbeing. And where fast foods are concerned, you have simply conformed to this world’s way of eating. You are waging a war against disobedience and rebellion because you are not honoring God’s temple with what you put in it; you are so far removed from His plan for your wellbeing. You have developed the mindset that this is my body and I can do whatever I choose to do with it. You have lost sight of the truth, that you were created to honor the things of God and not to follow your lusts and ungodly passions.

Because you are in a spiritual fight, you have to learn how to fight spirit with spirit. Scripture tells us that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in Christ for the pulling down of strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). Tradition, conformity, disobedience, and rebellion are strongholds that can be broken. The Word of God is the weapon to use to break strongholds. The Word of God is a deliverer when spoken in faith. You simply have to believe that it has the power to do what God says it can do. You may not believe this at first but continue to meditate on His word and continue to confess His Word because “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). And what you believe, you speak because the word of God has creative power. It changes circumstances and has the power to turn situations around. Therefore, I urge you to keep on studying, keep on meditating on the word, and keep on speaking the scriptures of prayer even if it seems like it’s not working for you. As you continually come in contact with these scriptures, your faith will increase until one day these scriptures of prayer will become the very weapon that will deliver you. This holds true if you want to

get free from any addiction, undesirable behavior, or sin. **Don't give up on God's Word. It is the hammer that will crack the rock. Refuse to become discouraged. It took you years to get into this mess it will take time to overcome in this area.** No matter how many times you have failed to overcome in the past, don't quit. Get up and try again. If you quit, you will never win. If you quit, you will never recapture your health. If you quit, you will never improve your overall wellbeing. I am a living witness concerning the Power of God's Word. The key to my winning did not come as a result of my nursing knowledge, although it was very helpful. My winning came as I submitted to God, surrendered my appetite to Him, and did what the Holy Spirit counseled me to do. I saturated myself with His word and leaned on His word as I strained to reach my goals. I had to lean on something that was stronger than my bonds. I had to say 'no' to food traditions that had been in my family for generations, and 'no' to fast foods—and 'yes' to God's way of eating. Without His word, I would still be captive to my appetite and carrying the heavy burden of sickness and disease. But today I'm well and stronger—so much stronger. My children no longer have to wrestle food from me. They can leave the kitchen knowing that I'm in the winner's circle. The visible weight loss and my food purchases at the grocery store are also a testimony to them that mom is going to be ok. As I'm typing this passage, I am munching on a trail mix of raw organic walnuts and almonds and raisins and will have for dinner baked fish and left over red beans cooked a few days ago without fat back or ham hocks (the key to flavor, I have discovered is lots of celery, onions, garlic and bell peppers, caramelized first and then tossed into the presoaked beans and slow cooked overnight until they develop a thick like gravy. Seasoned also with sea salt, black pepper, garlic and onion powder (not salt) basil and oregano and a few other spices like cumin, sage, and thyme. I used only a small piece of organic chicken sausage, which I discovered that I didn't really need. The flavor of the beans is simply wonderful.

Have the mindset that food is no longer the guest of honor. Do a mind shift when you receive an invitation to a function where food will be served. Speak to yourself and reconfirm to yourself that you are not going for the food but for the fellowship.

Once you are free, stay free. Once you have overcome over-indulgence and bad food choices that have held your appetite and health captive don't go back and pick them up again. Know your weaknesses and accept them. Don't play games with yourself or fool yourself. Know what sets you off. Know what you can't handle. Know what grips you and pulls you back into the old way. Know "what easily besets you." God said it best: "Strip off every weight and sin that so easily beset you so that you

may run the race with patience” (Romans 12:1-3). You have a race to run, goals to reach, dreams to fulfill. Don’t sell your future for wrong food choices.

Don’t let one day undo all that you have accomplished. This nugget refers to the special days, the holidays. It is around these times that we have a tendency to splurge and that’s ok with God’s approval. But don’t allow the special days be an occasion to overdo it and by doing so, undo all that you have worked so hard to achieve. One day, is not worth sabotaging your success. You owe this day nothing and God everything.

Avoid saving up space in your stomach by skipping meals when you have an engagement to attend where food is being served. That’s like deciding ahead of time that you are going to overeat and it interferes with your sense of integrity. Eat your regular meal and eat in moderation when you attend the function. Find another reason to be there instead of being there for the food.

Be on the alert for emotions/behaviors attached to weekends and summer months. This is when you have a tendency to let go and “splurge.” Find a way to control your behavior and don’t let those emotions/behaviors get out of control.

Learn from your mistakes and failures. If you know you can’t handle something—one taste of a particular food(s) sets you off and you lose control—learn from experience to stay away from those types of foods. Stop learning the same lesson over and over. This type of behavior opens the door to discouragement, and it will sabotage your success.

Don’t dwell on what you are giving up. Look at what you are gaining. There is an enemy of your soul (mind, will and emotions) who does not want you to win. He wants to keep you trapped in a vicious cycle of losing to your appetite. He will always try to get you to look back at everything that you have to let go of in order to win. You will begin to think that the price is too high to pay and that it’s not fair that everyone else is having fun eating what they want to, at anytime they want to, except you. You will begin to think that you are being deprived of the “good” stuff—that stuff that has held you captive and is about to destroy your health. **Instead, focus on what you are gaining:** improved health, weight loss, more energy, feeling good, improved self esteem, and most of all, you are doing what pleases God because He wants you at your best for yourself and for His glory.

Don’t take God’s grace for granted. It is to be cherished, treated as sacred. It is not a ticket to keep on knowingly and deliberately making wrong food choices and overeating. Don’t use grace as a means to cling to your old ways, the “Oh, God understands” type of attitude. God does understand our human

weakness but, on the other hand, we need a body to live in, He doesn't. God does understand. His understanding is that you will obey Him.

Stop trying to avoid a situation in your own strength because all you are doing is giving strength to the struggle. Instead, just whisper a simple, yet sincere prayer, "Holy Spirit, I need help."

Be aware of compliments. Receive them as a motivation to continue your course, but don't allow them to sabotage your success by giving you a false sense of accomplishment. You look good, but you're not there yet. So file those compliments away for now and continue your course.

Avoid being the rescuer of foods in your refrigerator. Sometimes, it might go bad, but you're not personally responsible to eat it all up before it spoils. This could lead to an undesirable path.

Chapter 7

REGARDING GOD'S WORD

Regard God's Word in the matter of nutrition. When you know that God is leading you to take control of your appetite or to eat right and to lose weight, regard His leading. Don't dismiss it as unimportant and have an "I will do it later when I get a chance" attitude. God never speaks just to hear himself say something. When He speaks to you about a certain area, it's because He loves you. He has already promised you long life, and He simply wants you to walk in that promise. Secondly, He knows that unless this area is dealt with, He will never have all of you. Unless conquered, this area will be a snare for you spiritually and physically, and He wants to see you prosper in that area (Exodus 9:20-21).

Isaiah 48:19 Don't let this be said of you: "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river (your health would have improved), your righteousness like the waves of the sea, your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains," (Your children's health and your grandchildren's health would have significantly improved, and they would have lived long if you had taken the time to turn your situation around, and if you had made changes in your food choices, you would have passed on an inheritance of good health for generations to come.)

Isaiah 48:17 "This is what the Lord says, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord Your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go."

Psalms 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."

Isaiah 48:20 "Leave Babylon; flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it." Most of the time our poor food choices, our over indulgences, and lack of portion control are our Babylon—the very things that are holding our physical well-being hostage. What has the Lord been dealing with you about? If you have a strong sense that the Lord is talking to you in this book about a particular area, whether it is poor food choices, over eating, lack of portion control, out of control spending habits, little or no exercise, a poisonous bitter attitude, mumbling, grumbling, or complaining, then make the necessary adjustments. Unless you let bitterness go and deal with stress and anxiety (there are many scriptures that can help you in these areas) or make some changes in your eating habits, your health will be held hostage. Learn to apply God's word in a stressful or undesirable situation in your life. "A cheerful heart is good medicine but a broken spirit (depression) saps a person's strength" (Proverbs 17:22). God said to me once 'Never underestimate the power of Joy.' He spoke

these words because I had gotten in the area of mumbling, grumbling and complaining about a job situation that I thought He wasn't moving fast enough to help me out of. When you allow mumbling, grumbling, and complaining to come in, joy leaves. Watch your attitude, and what you allow into your spirit. A bad attitude, as well as stress, depression and anxiety have as much a negative impact on your health as poor food choices do. Leave your Babylon, and announce with joy that you are turning your health around, and that you will commit to lifestyle changes that will promote good physical and emotional health and make your ways pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 5:29-30 “It is better to walk lame [or live with] one leg or one eye than to have your whole body casted into hell.” It is better to let go of poor food choices and wrong attitudes that **you know** are harming you than to have your entire body become sick.

1 Cor. 11:30 “My people are sick and dying early because they don't know what is right or true.” Take the time to understand the relationship between whole foods and its effects on your body. Take the time to read books on wellness empowerment through proper nutrition. Like life, this is a journey; a process. It will not come together overnight, or even in a month or two. It will take time to undo a lifetime of bad choices. It took me an entire year to lose 28 lbs. I have now lost a total of 35 lbs. I basically lost 1-2 lbs per week, except for the weeks that I lost no pounds or perhaps gained instead of losing. The point is; it did not happen overnight for me, and it will not happen overnight for you, **but it can happen**. Just stay focused and committed to your goal and your vision for your life. If you have dreamed of a thinner, healthier you, “dust those dreams off and get started again” (Kenneth Hagin, Jr., How to Make the Dream God Gave You Come True, 4). This is true with any of your God given dreams.

Proverbs 3: 5 “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not to your own understanding.” If you know that God is leading you to give up your current destructive eating habits, stop your reasoning. Begin the process of giving them up. God knows the end. He knows what is up ahead. Over ten years ago, when the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, ‘Nuts, grains, fruits and vegetables,’ those words undid me. “Lord you can't possibly be talking to me. I'm from the South, we eat vegetables but not the way you want me to eat them.” I went on and on with why I couldn't do it God's way. I love to eat and I loved to eat all of my favorite southern meals prepared the southern way. A few years ago I went to my healthcare provider. I weighed 205 lbs, I'm only 5 ft and 3 ½ inches tall, and she told me that I was borderline diabetic. I already knew that I had high blood pressure. She took a test called Hemoglobin A1C, that told the story of my blood sugar over a 3 month period, and it showed the beginning of

diabetes. My healthcare provider suggested that I start taking a pill to treat this. I pushed the pause button and said to her, “Give me some time. Don’t write the prescription yet.” I surrendered to what the Lord had been telling me. He knew what was up ahead, I didn’t. God knew that unless I turned my eating habits around and over to Him for His help, that destruction would come. He loved me enough to counsel me, and I almost rejected the counsel of God. I thought, “Surely, I have options.” When God speaks, there are no options. When God speaks, you have already run out of options. God spoke to me out of love. God didn’t need a body, I did. He loved me enough to tell me to turn my situation around. **You can take control of your own health.** What happened to my Hemoglobin A1C? I lost 12 lbs and it dropped from 6.4 to 6.1 (the normal range is 4-5.9). I have since then, lost 35 lbs. It has taken me an entire year and some months to lose the weight, but I did it and still have about 40 more pounds to lose. God loved me enough to tell me to turn my situation around. I am telling you my story to inspire you to turn your situation around. God loves you and is committed to taking you to the winners’ circle. During my journey, love held me close and would not let me go, and I reluctantly but slowly responded to God’s love. Ask God for a heart to respond to Him.

Chapter 8

AVOID RED FLAG FOODS

Those would be foods that fight for your affection and cool your affection for the things of God. For me that's basically most desserts that have refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup—sugar that is harmful and addictive, “deceitful dainties” (Proverbs 23:1-3) the Bible calls them, and most, if not all fast foods and white carbohydrates. These foods taste good on the taste buds but wreak havoc in your body. These items were my drugs of choice in the past, and I overly indulged in them. I simply cannot handle them. For me, to eat them and to continue to eat them is like “a dog returning to its own vomit, and, a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud” (2 Peter 2:22). You have to recognize, and by now, you probably already know, what foods you need to stay away from in order to win. Don't make room for them in your life, and when they do become an issue, for example at a dinner party, pray, ask God to help you to avoid them or take a bare minimum just to satisfy your host and your taste buds. You can say “No” and choose foods that are within your dietary guideline. There will always be choices to make. Pray and ask for help to make the better choice and sincerely desire to make a better choice. God is always there to help you, and if you fail, He will extend grace; just don't play games with Him and don't quit.

Chapter 9

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A DANGER ZONE

- You have lost several pounds or inches and you are feeling kind of good about it, even feeling a little sexy. Don't get comfortable here and stop doing what it takes to continue to win. This is a danger zone. It is just a moment in the journey of achieving your goal. Enjoy the success, but you're not there yet.
- You begin to look back and have recurrent thoughts of "I can't live this way."
- Your exercise regimen is no longer a priority. You are making consistent excuses as to why you can't exercise today.
- You are too accommodating to the foods that you need to either let go of or reduce drastically. You begin to make room for them in your life again.
- When you see that thing that has held you captive for so long, you come to a halting stop. The earth stops moving. It still has you. Stay away from it.
- You went shopping and bought all kinds of fruits and vegetables, including lettuce because you want to "salad it" for most of the week and at the end of the week it's still in the refrigerator turning brown. "The heart is deceitful above all things.... Who can understand it" (Jeremiah 17:9)?
- The areas of extremes are dangerous. Stay in the middle of the road. If you know you want to get up and eat a piece of cake the day after a cook out or that piece of barbeque that's calling your name, don't lie to yourself. There is no way on God's green earth that you are going to let your favorite foods sit in the refrigerator the day after and you're not going to have any of it. God desires truth in the inner man (Proverbs 51:6). Allow yourself to eat some **in moderation**. Don't sit there all morning lusting, desiring, wanting that thing and those emotions are not going away and you are becoming increasingly miserable. **Joy is important in this journey as well.** Eat a small amount, **if you can handle it, so that you can move on.** Remember moderation, and don't get trapped in that piece of cake, or that soda the next meal, the next day and the next day. Take note, this tip is in the category of danger zone. Enter in only if you have an exit strategy and only if you are strong enough to pull out. Don't get trapped. "Can a man scoop fire into his lap and not be burned? Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet" (Proverbs 6:27, 28)?

- Agree with how the Word of God, the dictionary and the experts all define moderation. Avoid writing your own definition that allows you to eat what you want, when you want, how often you want, and how much you want. **You probably don't know more than the experts and you definitely don't know more than God. Believe their definition of moderation.** You will have a better shot at success with their definition than with yours.
- Be careful of the days leading up to the special days (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries). It's easy to get out of focus during these times and put your lifestyle changes on hold.—Let me repeat this. **It is really easy to slip back into your old ways during these times and thus sabotage your success.** When you begin to sabotage your success, you open the door of discouragement and from the point of discouragement begin a downward spiral. Before you know it, you are back to the starting point. That's hard to take over and over again. I have said this before, but it bears repeating: **Hard work pays off, and discipline brings success.**
- You love what God hates. You embrace what He has specifically told you to get rid of or to let go of. This is the true danger zone because it leads to rebellion and rebellion against God is a recipe for disaster.

Chapter 10

HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN GOD IS TALKING TO YOU

- When you are heading to the restaurant or grocery store to get your favorite dessert, and in your heart, you have every intention of returning back to your old ways and pig out on it. As you are going into the store or restaurant an obese person just happens to come across your path. This is God talking to you.
- I heard Beth Moore, founder of Living Proof Ministries, say this during one of her Bible teachings on the television program Life Today with James and Betty Robison, and it is true, “You keep having a recurrent thought that you need to lose weight. Chances are you need to lose weight.” The bible tells us that God establishes our thoughts. If you are overweight, are having health challenges, and the thought of needing to lose weight and eating right is a recurrent thought, chances are it’s God who is establishing that thought. Follow His lead. If it’s difficult to let go of wrong food choices or wrong eating habits, be honest with God. Let Him help you but make sure your motives are clean and clear before God. Don’t try to hide the fact that, at this point in your life, you love the food or any undesirable habit more than you love Him.
- After dinner, when the house is quiet and everyone has retired to their rooms, relaxing, and you think the coast is clear, so you sneak into the kitchen when you think no one is looking to eat another meal and another piece of dessert, and one of your children just happens to come along at that very moment and begins to wrestle the food from you and yell with a loud voice for reinforcement from other family members, and the team subdues you and takes the food from you, this is God talking to you. He is calling you to win in life, to win over your appetite.
- You worked the 3-11 shift, again, and you are tired and hungry, and all you want to do is eat something, you don’t care what it is, and go to sleep. When you get home a piece of fruit just happens to be sitting on the kitchen counter. That’s God talking to you. He is guiding you to the winners circle.

Chapter 11

HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE OUT OF CONTROL

“Self discipline is the mark of maturity. If you don’t have control of yourself in a certain area, you are undisciplined. In that area, you are not mature. If you want to be a mature Christian, then you must be disciplined” (Joyce Meyer *Starting Your Day Right*, 34).

- When your children try to take the extra plate of food from you and you pull a knife on them—not to harm them—just to get them to back off, you are out of control.
- You have had 2 pieces of dessert, but you are going back for your third, and you just can’t seem to stop yourself, and you keep telling yourself that this is only moderation; I don’t do this often. Not only are you out of control and rewriting your definition of moderation, you are in a serious danger zone. Your weight loss depends on your moving out of this area. You do “have discipline and self control in the Holy Spirit” (Galatians 5: 22, 23). If only you would cooperate and accept His help. In the final analysis, just obey God and do what pleases Him.
- You begin to make frequent trips to the kitchen after dinner.
- Your old eating habits are becoming more and more frequent.

Chapter 12

SCRIPTURES THAT HELPED ME TO MOVE AHEAD

This may sound a little weird, but sometimes when I eat a particular food, certain out of control emotions from previous experiences with this food comes out of nowhere and begins to take me back to a time when I had no control over my appetite and had no desire to eat right. When I eat these foods now, they could be healthy, nutritious foods like mustard or collard greens prepared now, God's way, but all of a sudden, I can remember the unhealthy way they used to be prepared, and the way they used to be prepared were my favorite pig out foods, the ham hocks, etc. A certain emotion is elicited and wants to take me back and take me out of control again. I have to speak the Word in order to move ahead. They have pulled me up and out of the danger zone many times and have been responsible in propelling me ahead. **When you speak these words in faith with a sincere heart, they will become a bridge for you to walk on, to carry you forward. They are life changing and life forming. They created another reality for me, a higher reality, and these spoken words empowered me and transformed me right there in the situation. These scriptures have given me superhuman, supernatural strength to rise up and take authority over overwhelming emotions—emotions that are just too hard for me to handle alone.** If gaining control over your appetite has been a struggle for you, as it has for me, then you will need to meditate on these scriptures and get them down in your spirit because they are keys to your success. Just gliding over them every now and then will not work. You have to eat them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. **Where food used to be an anchor for your emotions, these scriptures will become an anchor for you, and they will bring stability and strength to your inner man. They will hold you when you need to be held and will prevent you from giving in to your passions. They will propel you when you need to move forward:**

-let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us... (Hebrews 12:1, 2).
- For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, or love and of self-discipline. (II Timothy 1:7).
- Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. (Isaiah 43:18).
-But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

-he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God (1 Peter 4:1-2).
- Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12).
-I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live... (Deuteronomy 30:19).

There will come a time when the enemy of your soul will desperately try to get you to remember the way it used to be when food held you hostage and will dare to suggest, “What a wonderful time you were having back then.” One thing to keep in mind: Satan never tells the whole truth. He tells just enough truth mixed with lies to trip you up. You have to remember who you are and what your goals are, and speak the Word to that situation: **“I am a new creation in Christ, the old has gone, and the new has come (2 Corinthians 6:17). “I remember not the former things” (Isaiah 43:18).** You have made a quality decision to forget the past and embrace the future you have in Christ.

There will come a time when quoting scriptures will seem ineffective. It will seem as though the Word has lost its power. We know, of course, that that’s not true. It will seem that you have temporarily lost faith because you want that particular food so bad and you want to go back and travel down that toxic path again because it’s familiar. It will seem that your desire for this particular food (s) or behavior is so strong that it overrides the Word and impairs your judgment. This makes no sense, I know, but believe me I have been there and the experience is real. During this time of struggle, this is when you yell, **“Lord, Jesus, help!!!”** All you need to do is cry out. Nothing gets heaven’s attention quicker than a heartfelt cry. Don’t do what I call “lip service,” and mumble some religious prayer that goes nowhere but the end of your lips. This would be a good time to give a heartfelt cry, and instantly Jesus, becomes your strength. This is true of all overwhelming situations in life. At the moment you cry out—God and God alone becomes your strength.

Chapter 13

HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE WINNING

- You begin to do what is right and not what you want to do. Your actions are keeping you in the winners' circle. You are doing those things that support your new friend, "weight loss and its companion, healthy living."
- You begin to plan for successes. You begin to take your meals to work. You begin to take your snacks on those long trips and even short trips when you know that you will be out of the house around lunch time.
- You no longer have a desire to turn into fast food places. They are not on your radar anymore.
- Your lettuce and other vegetables and fruits are no longer turning brown. In fact, by the end of the week you have to purchase more.
- Your grease jar is taking longer to fill up because now you have chosen baking your meats instead of frying. Baking has now become your new habit.
- When you see that thing that has held you captive for so long, there is a "catch" in your steps, a slight stumble, but you come to yourself quickly, straighten out your walk, and you keep on gliding.
- Your recovery phase is quicker when you get off track. It used to take you weeks and days to recover from an out of focus experience, but now, with the next meal you are back on track, and the next morning you are back on the walking trail.
- You have made room in your life for exercise. It is now part of your daily routine just like taking a shower and putting on your clothes.
- You are truly sorry when you get out of focus because, now, you are no longer playing games. You have accepted the truth that good health is your inheritance, and you have decided to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You want to look good. Also, Pleasing God has now become your greatest desire; you truly want to win. You give yourself permission to win. You are now comfortable with success.
- You are at an event where food is being served, and you put mostly vegetables on your plate and small portions of the other foods, especially the white, starchy ones.
- You have done a mind shift when attending an event. You actually go for the fellowship and because you like the speaker. Food is no longer the guest of honor.

- When you prepare a meal for your family that's not exactly balanced simply because you love them, and you don't want them to suffer too badly, you also prepare a well-balanced meal for yourself because you have decided ahead of time that even though you might have a meal from the not so balanced one, you will not remain there. You have prepared an exit strategy.
- When in the face of "there's nothing good to choose from," you keep your focus and maintain your integrity.
- You begin to hate what God hates.
- **You recognize immediately** that you are grazing, stopping, staring, desiring to look back, longing for the old ways. You immediately tell yourself, "don't stop here," 'this is not where you are to dwell.' Remember, no athlete has ever won a race looking back.
- You ask God to forgive you when you get out of focus and just plain old mess up. Then you allow yourself to accept His forgiveness, but you recognize that His forgiveness is not a ticket to continue to mess up.
- You accept the truth that it is now time for you to grow up and become mature and disciplined in this area.
- You quickly accept the hand of grace that is extended to you and get back on track and choose to not go down the road of rebellion: "I've messed up so I might as well give up and forget about walking in God's wisdom. I don't care anymore. I'm hopeless, I'm never going to lose weight and don't care about turning around." This situation is what I call the road of grace vs. the road of rebellion. We always have a choice. You know that you are winning when you quickly accept the road of grace and the hand that is guiding you to victory.

Chapter 14

SCRIPTURE OF PRAYER: VICTORY OVER GLUTTONY

Father, it is written in Your Word that if I confess with my lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in my heart that you have raised Him from the dead, I shall be saved. Father I am your child and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord over my spirit, my soul and my body. I make Him Lord over every situation in my life. Therefore, I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me.

Father, *I have made a quality decision to give You my appetite.* I choose *Jesus* rather than the indulgence of my flesh. I command my body to get in line with Your Word. I eat only as much as is sufficient for me. I eat and I am satisfied.

When I sit down to eat, I consider what is before me. I am not given to the desire of dainties or deceitful foods.

Like a boxer, I buffet my body – handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships – and subdue it. I bring my body into subjection to my inward man – the real me. Not all things are helpful – good for me to do though permissible. I will not become the slave of anything or be brought under its power.

My body is for the Lord. I dedicate my body – presenting all my members and faculties – as a living sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to You, presenting them as implements of righteousness. I am united to You, Lord, and become one spirit with you. My body is the temple, the very sanctuary, of the Holy Spirit who lives within me, whom I have received as a gift from You, Father.

I am not my own. I was bought for a price, made Your own. So then, I honor You and bring glory to You in my body. Therefore, I always exercise and discipline myself, bringing under authority my carnal affections, bodily appetites and worldly desires. I endeavor in all respects to have a clean conscience, void of offense toward You, Father, and toward men. I keep myself from idols – from anything and everything that would occupy the place in my heart due to You, from any sort of substitute for You that would take first place in my life.

I no longer spend the rest of my natural life living by my human appetites and desires, but I live for what you will! I am on my guard. I refuse to be overburden and depressed, weighed down with the giddiness and headache and nausea of self-indulgence, drunkenness (on food), worldly worries and cares, for I have been given a spirit of power and of love of a sound mind. I have discipline and self-control.

Father I *do* resist temptation in the name of Jesus. I strip off and throw aside every encumbrance – unnecessary weight – and this gluttony which so readily tries to cling to and entangle me. I run with

patient endurance and steady persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before me, looking away from all distractions to Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith.

Christ the Messiah *will* be magnified and get glory and praise in this body of mine and *will* be boldly exalted in my person. Thank You, Father, in Jesus' name! Hallelujah!

Scripture references

Romans 10:9, 10

Philippians 4:13

Deuteronomy 30:19

1 Corinthians 6:12, 17 AMP

Romans 12:1 AMP

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 AMP

Luke 21:34 AMP

Proverbs 23:1-3

Proverbs 25:16

1 Corinthians 9:27 AMP

2 Timothy 1:7 AMP

James 4:7

Hebrews 12:1, 2 AMP

Philippians 1:20 AMP

Chapter 15

WORDS TO DEFINE

Free Radicals	Flavonoids	Not from Concentrate
Phytochemicals	Folic Acid	Potential Hydrogen (Body PH)
Carbohydrates	High Fructose Corn Syrup	Phylates
Antioxidants	Homocysteine level	Phytonutrients
Fat-Soluble Vitamins	Hypothalamus	Poly Unsaturated Fatty Acids
Insulin	Hydrogenated fats, full or partial	Probiotics
Cholesterol	Hydrolyzed Protein	Saturated fat
Fiber	Immune System	Protein
Ascorbic Acid	Calorie	Refined
Trans Fat	Adrenaline	Metabolism
LDL Cholesterol	Satiety	Serotonin
Lycopene	Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)	Sodium Benzoate
Nitrates/Nitrites	Monosaturated Fat	Sodium Caseinate
Beta Carotene	Carotenoids	Thyroid Hormone
EDTA	Triglycerides	Obesity
Enriched	Omega 3, 6, 9	Oxidation or Oxidative Stress
Enzymes	Oxidation or Oxidative Stress	Pancreas
Fortified	Unsaturated Fats	Water-soluble vitamins
Vitamin B6	Concentrate	Whole Food Nutrients
High Density Lipoprotein (HDL)		

Chapter 16

A PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Jesus, I desire to make you Lord of my life. God, I believe in Jesus Christ as your son and that you raised him from the dead. I want that resurrection power in my life too. I don't know much about you but I am willing to learn. Please come into my heart and make me a new creature. I am willing to turn away from my sin and follow you if you will help me because I can't do it alone.

If you have sincerely prayed this prayer, and do believe in your heart, and have confessed with your mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that God raised Him from the dead then you are saved. It is that simple. Salvation is a free gift. All you have to do is believe in His Son. Now that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, get a good bible (The King James Version is always a good choice. I have had great success with the Life Application Study Bible). Start reading the New Testament because it is easy to understand for new believers. Ask God to lead you to a church where you can get the help you need to better understand the Scripture as you can grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. As you do these things, you are creating an environment whereby He can take His rightful place in your heart as Lord of your life. Once you believe, you have to allow Him to take you a step further by making Him Lord of your life. That means that He will personally get involved in your life: Spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially in order to make a winner out of you. His main work in your life though is to make you more like His first son, Jesus. You will learn about who you are in Him and will come to understand your Kingdom privileges. This type of knowledge comes by reading the Word of God on a daily basis so that you might get to know Jesus better and by having a conversation with Him, called prayer. During this prayer time, pour your heart out to God. Share the good, the bad, and the ugly. Hold nothing back. I guarantee you that He will not whisper a word of it to your neighbor. As a matter of fact, He already knows. He just wants you to admit it and to acknowledge that you need His help and He will help you through it. Also, allow God time to speak to you as well. You might hear a small still voice within. You might just have a knowing. He will speak to you through His Word or through someone else. In time, you will learn how to recognize His voice. For now, don't strain to hear it. Just focus on reading the Word of God. You also need to fellowship with other believers so that you might be strengthened and encouraged on this wonderful journey that you have started on. If you don't have a church home try visiting different churches until you know which one is for you. If you don't feel comfortable visiting different churches, just read your bible on a daily basis, pray and watch Christian television. TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network) is a good place to start. They

have wonderful bible teachers and pastors on their programs and until the Lord lead you to a church home, just sit in your T.V. room with your bible and commune with God as you hear the Word on T.V. Don't worry. If you are sincere about fellowshiping and continuing your walk with Christ, God will let you know when it is time to get up and go out and find a church. If you are sincere, God will lead you. For now, don't worry about it. Just read and pray and take advantage of the good Christian T.V. programs. Getting help understanding the Word of God through the T.V. is better than getting no understanding at all. In time, God will take you a step further in your walk. Let me point a couple of things out: Going to church does not save you, doing religious things does not save you. Receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord is the only thing that brings spiritual salvation but going to church and banding together with other believers strengthens your walk and helps you to keep focus.

Chapter 17

A PRAYER TO KNOW THE ETERNAL TRUTH

To the one they call Jesus. I don't know you but I want to know the eternal truth. There are so many views out there and I am confused. I want to know the real truth, not man's opinion. I am not sure if I am saying the right things but I seek the truth. If you are real and if you are who they say you are then I ask you to give me this faith to believe and I ask you to reveal yourself to me.

If you have sincerely prayed this prayer then I encourage you to continue your search for the eternal truth by reading the Word of God called the Bible for better understanding. I encourage you to follow the advice that I shared above because you will need guidance as you pursue the eternal truth of salvation.

RECOMMENDED READING, AUDIO AND WEB SITES

Get the Sugar Out, Ann Louise Gittleman

The Maker's Diet and Perfect Weight America, Rubin Jordan

Prayers That Avail Much, Special Edition, Word Ministries, Inc.

How to Make the Dream God Gave you Come Alive, Kenneth Hagin, Jr.

Living with Restrictions, T.D. Jakes, (DVD)

The Life that God Blesses, Jerry Savelle Ministry (DVD)

Adventures in Faith, Jerry Savelle Ministry, May/June 2008:3

Fit for Life, Harvey and Marilyn Diamond

Starting Your Day Right, Joyce Meyer

God's Medicine, Kenneth Hagin Ministries

NUTRITIONAL WEBSITE

(Google these sites)

www.familynutrition@intellihealth.com. Health Links

www.juiceplusreviewed.com

www.americanheartassociation.org.

www.ars.usda.gov. Weight and Obesity

www.hsp.harvard.edu.nutrition source carbohydrates

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